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the morning," "Mine eyes prevented the night watches"), and this is an inconsistency and a blemish.

These examples establish the real superiority of the RV. This superiority is enough to cause its general adoption, but not enough to put it on a level with the work of the New Testament Company.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS.

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As these articles concerning the Sunday School lessons make use of the Assyrian inscriptions and like sources of information, a word of caution as to the use of such materials will be in place. Assyrian grammar and lexicography, are, of course, both incomplete. The inscriptions themselves are often fragmentary. Fresh discoveries will change the conclusions now reached, in many important points. It would be foolish to use these discoveries without recognizing the existence of these elements of uncertainty. It would be especially foolish in questions where we ourselves are likely to be so much influenced by prejudice, as in the question whether the Assyrian records confirm the biblical record, or the contrary. On these points, the little work of Professor Francis Brown, *Assyriology, its Use and Abuse in Old Testament Study*, published this year by Charles Scribner's Sons, is worthy of careful study.

The liability to mistake is, of course, increased in the case of those who, like the present writer, have only a limited apparatus, and depend largely on translations made by others. I should be sorry to claim for my work any other grounds of acceptance than those which properly belong to it. But I intend to confine myself to statements which can be tested by the evidence, both by those who are experts in these matters, and by those who are not; and I hope that most of my statements will endure testing, and that all of them will be worth testing.

OCTOBER 11. THE FAMINE IN SAMARIA (2 Kgs. VII., 1-17).

From 2 Kgs. VI., 24, it appears that Benhadad was now king of Damascus, if this was Benhadad the predecessor of Hazael, Jehoram was king of Israel; if it was Benhadad the son of Hazael, the king of Israel was Jehoahaz or Jehoash, the son or the grandson of Jehu. The circumstances agree very closely with those of the later Benhadad (see 2 Kgs. XIII., especially verses 3, 7, 24, etc.); but on the whole,

there is no sufficient reason for rejecting the presumption that the events are narrated mainly in the order in which they occurred, and that they therefore belong to the reign of Jehoram. Considerations mentioned in the article in the *STUDENT* for September limit this date to the 11th year of Jehoram, or a little earlier.

In the coalition against Shalmanezzer, described in that article, were the Damascus Syrians, many Hittite kingdoms, Israel, and "men of the country of the Egyptians" (*Kurkh Monolith*, II., 90-95).¹ We found that Shalmanezzer claims to have gained victories over this coalition in the year before Jehoram came to the throne, and in the 4th, the 5th and the 8th years of Jehoram, and over Hazael of Damascus at several later dates. We do not know whether the Israelites and Egyptians remained in the coalition after the first of these dates, since they are not explicitly mentioned in the accounts of the subsequent campaigns. In general (and only in general), it seems to have been true that the peoples composing the coalition became united whenever danger from Assyria was imminent, and made war on one another during the intervals when the arms of Shalmanezzer were elsewhere employed.

During one or more of these intervals occurred the events of the lesson, and of the preceding chapters. Benhadad had carried on a predatory warfare against Israel for several years (2 Kgs. V., 2; VI., 8-10, etc.). The distress thus occasioned amounted to a famine, in certain localities. In Shunem, for example, there was a famine for seven years (2 Kgs. VIII., 1, 2, 3), produced by some other cause than the total unproductiveness of the soil (2 Kgs. VIII., 6). The help granted to Israel through Jehovah's prophet had at length induced Benhadad to give up the making of raids; but he made an invasion instead, and besieged Samaria. It is evident that his Hittite and Egyptian allies were not with him in this war; indeed, he had reason to fear that they might arm against him (2 Kgs. VII., 6). It is not against 32 allied kings, as in the days of Ahab, that Israel has to contend, but, so far as appears, against the king of Damascus only, but on the other hand, Israel is weaker now than then, and seems relatively weaker, even as compared with her less formidable adversary. She had probably suffered, directly or indirectly, along with the neighboring countries, from the repeated invasions of Shalmanezzer; while her recent subject, Mesha, the Moabite, remained in a condition of revolt and of hostility, Judah was her natural ally, as against the Syrians, but Judah was just

¹ For an explanation of this and other references to inscriptive sources, see note in the *STUDENT* for September, 1885, p. 26.

now prostrated by the successful revolt of Edom and Libnah, by the incursion of the Philistines and Arabians, by the repeated massacres of her men of royal blood, by the retributive sickness of her fratricide king, and more than all by the lack of confidence, on the part of his subjects, in his apostate administration. Benhadad had evidently chosen a favorable time for asserting his own interests, as against those of his neighbors and allies.

The historical setting of the passage especially emphasizes two of its lessons. First, Jehovah has wonderful resources, both natural and supernatural, for rescuing his people when they seem to be in hopeless extremities. Secondly, when we have an opportunity to stop the succession of evil, it is dangerous to neglect it. When Ahab had Benhadad in his power, some 14 years previous to this siege, he should not have let him escape without guarantees which would have prevented these later invasions. It was criminal in him, and is criminal in us, to neglect such an opportunity.

OCTOBER 18. JEHU'S FALSE ZEAL (2 Kgs. x., 15-31).

Not long after Benhadad's retreat from Samaria, Hazael murdered him and became his successor (2 Kgs. VIII., 7-15). Not far from the same time, probably, the Shunamite woman returned from Philistia (2 Kgs. VIII., 3-6). Just at the close of the 11th year of Jehoram, so that the date is sometimes counted to this year and sometimes to the next, Jehoram of Judah died, and was succeeded by Ahaziah (2 Kgs. VIII., 25; IX., 29; 2 Chron. XXI., 19). He and Jehoram of Israel formed an alliance against Syria. The fact that they were in possession of Ramoth Gilead (2 Kgs. VIII., 28, 29; IX., 1-14) shows that successes had been gained for Israel; for even after Ahab's victories, the Syrians had occupied this place (1 Kgs. XXII., 3).

The situation was full of menace to the worshipers of Jehovah. Ahaziah was a declared adherent of Baal, and Jehoram evidently favored Baal, though he maintained the religion of the calves as the state religion. Jezebel and Athaliah were powerful in the two kingdoms. The alliance against Syria was being crowned with success, and was giving prestige to the two kings. A little time, and the persecutions of the Baalite party might be renewed more fiercely than ever. The illness of Jehoram gave opportunity for an uprising which might avert these threatened calamities. The situation itself accounts for the fact that the king of Judah and his relatives, and the prophets of Baal, shared the fate of Jehoram and Jezebel. Our lesson is entitled "Jehu's false zeal." We have no interest in defending him, except so far as the LORD approved his conduct (2 Kgs. x., 30); but the question

is by no means one-sided against him. The adherents of Baal had done what they could to deserve their fate. Whether Jehu was justified in inflicting it depends on the question whether it was necessary for the protection of others. At all events, his zeal was false, in that he himself was not true (2 Kgs. x., 29, 31).

The Assyrian inscriptions give us the fact, not recorded in the Bible, that Jehu, at the very outset of his reign, in the year when he killed Jehoram (the following year being counted his first year), acknowledged himself the tributary of the king of Assyria, who, that year, according to his own account of the matter, signally defeated Hazael. A quite full account of the victory over Hazael is given in the Bull Inscription of W. A. I. (Vol. III., p. 5), closing with the statement that, "in those days," Shalmanezzer received the tribute of Tyre, Zidon, and of "Jehu, son of Omri." An abridgment of this account is found on the Black Obelisk, without the mention of Jehu. The second epigraph of this obelisk, however, is thus translated by Geo. Smith:

"Tribute of Jehu, son of Omri, silver, gold, bowls of gold, cups of gold, bottles of gold, vessels of gold, maces, royal utensils, rods of wood I received of him" (*Chronology*, p. 114).

OCTOBER 25. THE TEMPLE REPAIRED (2 Kgs. XII., 1-15).

Twenty-nine years intervened between the revolution under Jehu and the repairing of the Temple in the 23d year of Joash. The scene now changes from Samaria to Jerusalem. During 28 of the 29 years, Jehu had reigned over Israel. It looks as if Joash were stirred up to his duty by the fact that his neighbor king had just died.

Immediately upon the accession of Jehu, Athaliah seized the government in Judah. Though a devoted worshiper of Baal, she was evidently compelled to recognize the religion of Jehovah as the state religion. From the outset, Israel under Jehu was threatened by Hazael, who ultimately inflicted great damage (2 Kgs. x., 32, 33). Mesha, in the Moabite stone, claims to have made conquests very like those here attributed to Hazael. In the earlier years of his reign, however, Jehu was probably more or less protected from Hazael, by his liege lord Shalmanezzer, who, in the 3d year of Jehu, made one more victorious campaign against Damascus, and received tribute from the Phœnician cities. At the close of the 6th year of Jehu, Joash succeeded Athaliah in Jerusalem.

The Black Obelisk brings the history of Shalmanezzer up to his 31st year, which was the 13th of Jehu, and the 7th of Joash. The As-

syrian Eponym Canon¹ assigns the four following years either to him or to another king of the same name, and continues with the lists for the reigns of Samas Rimmon (Samsi-Vul) and Rimmon Nirari (Vul-Nirari). Various inscriptions mention these kings as respectively the son and the grandson of Shalmanezer.²

They both claim to have had dominion to the Mediterranean coast. Samas Rimmon says that he began his reign by quelling a formidable revolt in Mesopotamia, headed by Assur-Dayin, son of Shalmanezer, and begun in the reign of Shalmanezer. Some Assyriologists have held that this revolt filled a period of many years between the 31st of Shalmanezer and the 1st of Samas Rimmon, and that, for some reason, the eponyms for these years are not found in the Assyrian Canon, but that there is a gap in the canon at this point. See Smith's *Chronology*, p. 73. On the supposition that there was no such interval, but that the canon is continuous, the 1st year of Samas Rimmon was the 18th of Jehu, and 12th of Joash. Two years later, the Assyrian king says that he marched his armies to the sea of the setting sun. To his later years, one copy of the canon attributes expeditions to Babylonia. On the supposition we are now making as to the synchronism, this would remove the pressure of the Assyrian power from Hazael, leaving him free at this date, to prosecute his plans against Israel.

There is little, therefore, in the external history, to throw light on the subject of the repairing of the Temple by Joash.

¹ This Canon is a list of the *Eponyms*, the public officers by whose names the years were designated. The most complete copy is on a small tablet, figured in the *Western Asiatic Inscriptions*. It is written in six columns, three on each side, with from 45 to 51 names in a column. The fifth column closes with the accession of Esar Haddon, B. C. 681. Many parts of the writing are erased, but the lines can generally be traced, even where the writing is obliterated. Six other fragmentary copies are known to exist. Generally speaking, there is a decided similarity between the copies, though some of them contain lists of titles and of events, as well as of eponyms. Friedrich Delitzsch, in German, and George Smith, in English, have written on this subject. Smith's work, *The Assyrian Canon*, published by Samuel Bagster & Sons (cited in these articles as Smith's *Chronology*), is very full and thorough, though it fails to give needed information on some points. It happens that the seven copies of the Canon, taken together, give a substantially complete list of eponyms, to the number of about 260, extending back from the later years of Assurbanipal, say 647 B. C.

² The text of the monolith of Samas Rimmon is in W. A. I., Vol. I., pp. 29-34. There is a translation of it in *Records of the Past*, Vol. I. Sayce says that it "is engraved upon an obelisk found in the south-east palace of Nimrud, the ancient Calah, and now in the British Museum. It is written in archaic characters, which differ greatly from those ordinarily met with on the Assyrian monuments. They are more picturesque than the latter, and were therefore sometimes preferred for the same reason that makes us occasionally adopt the old black-letter type.

In W. A. I., Vol. I., p. 35, are some inscriptions of Rimmon Nirari. One of these is translated in part in Smith's *Chronology*, p. 115. Another, consisting of 27 lines, is translated by Sayce, in *Rec. of Past*, Vol. I. Parts of this have been published by Layard and by Bonomi. Sayce describes it as "found upon a pavement slab from Nimrud, which was discovered at the edge of the mound between the north-west and south-west palaces."

On pages 82, 77 and 205, Smith mentions other fragments concerning these two kings. These especially speak of them as the son and the grandson of Shalmanezer.

NOVEMBER 1. DEATH OF ELISHA (2 Kgs. XIII., 14-25).

The death of Elisha is dated by the fact that it occurred after Jehoash of Israel became king. It was probably soon after, since this accession was more than 60 years after Elisha's prophetic career began. It was therefore some 14 years, or a little more, after the events of the last lesson. The repairing of the Temple was in the 23d year of Joash, the 1st of Jehoahaz. Two years later, on the supposition that this part of the Assyrian Canon is continuous, Rimmon Nirari, the successor of Samas Rimmon, began his reign of 29 years. Later, Jehoiada, the high-priest, died, Joash behaved badly, and Hazael of Syria made a substantially complete conquest of Judah, Israel, and Philistia (2 Kgs. XII.; XIII.). In the 37th year of Joash, Jehoash of Israel began to reign along with his father, though the 16 years of his reign are counted, not from this date, but from the close of his father's 17th year, which was either two or three years later. The death of Elisha took place after the accession of Jehoash, either shortly before or shortly after the death of Jehoahaz. About the same time, Hazael died, and was succeeded by his son Benhadad. Joash of Judah, after a time of illness and helplessness, was removed by a violent death, the year following the death of Jehoahaz. It would be difficult to imagine a condition of things more hopeless, from the point of view of a worshiper of Jehovah in Northern Israel, than that which existed when Elisha made these encouraging promises to Jehoash.

According to the extract given by Smith, on page 115, Rimmon Nirari claims to have received "taxes and tribute"

"From over the river Euphrates, Syria, and Phœnicia, the whole of it,
Tyre, Zidon, Omri, Edom and Philistia,
To over against the great sea of the setting sun."

He declares that he besieged Mariha, King of Syria, in his royal city Damascus, until he submitted, paying 2300 talents of silver, 20 talents of gold, and a vast value in other kinds of tribute. If the Assyrian Canon is here continuous, and if this expedition occurred after the middle of Rimmon Nirari's reign, it may explain the means which Jehovah employed to weaken the Syrians and enable Jehoash to beat them. On these suppositions, Mariha may have been either Benhadad or Benhadad's successor. The enormous exactions made from him by Rimmon Nirari are such as might well have been met by the son of the man who had enriched himself with the plunder of the Temple at Jerusalem (2 Kgs. XII., 18). From the times of Shalmanezzer, apparently, most of the Palestinian countries, excepting Judah, were tributary to Assyria, up to the days of Jeroboam II. and Uzziah.

The next Sunday School lesson from the Book of Kings is from the history of King Hezekiah. From the accession of Jehu to that of Hezekiah, by the most natural interpretation of the numbers given in the Book of Kings, was an interval of 169 years. By supposing a co-reign of 11 years of Jeroboam II. with his father Jehoash, the received chronology shortens the interval to 158 years. But the Assyrian Eponym list for this period contains but 118 names. Many scholars hold that the biblical numerals for this period are either corrupt, or must be so interpreted as to reduce the interval to the 118 years. There is no space here to discuss this question. Fresh evidence may some time be discovered which will decisively settle it. As the evidence now stands, I am compelled to hold that the compilers or the copyists of the Assyrian Canon, either by design or by accident, omitted 51 years, perhaps in a single block, from their list. On the supposition that such an omission was made, at some date after the 29 years of Rimmon Nirari, the order of the events now under consideration was somewhat as follows: Amaziah succeeded Joash in Judah. His 1st year was the 2d of Jehoash of Israel, and the 17th of Rimmon Nirari (2 Kgs. XIV., 1). Both Israel and Judah were at the time in virtual subjection to Syria. But Rimmon Nirari attacked Syria. Benhadad being thus weakened, Jehoash gained victory after victory over him. Amaziah aroused himself, and made successful war in Edom. This was followed by a war between Judah and Israel, which left Judah at the mercy of her enemy. Soon after, Jehoash died, and was succeeded by Jeroboam, whose first year was the 16th of Jehoash, the 15th of Amaziah, and the second year after the death of Rimmon Nirari (2 Kgs. XIV., 23). Through the victory gained by his father, Jeroboam was practically master of Judah, as well as of Israel. Amaziah lived 15 years longer, died by conspiracy, and left Judah for 11 years without a king. Meanwhile Jeroboam achieved greater successes than had been achieved by any former king of Israel since David. He was evidently wise enough to maintain his prestige in Judah. He protected the interests of both kingdoms. He restored the coast of Israel, from Hamath to the eastern arm of the Red Sea, including Damascus within his border (2 Kgs. XIV., 25, 28). The borders which he established resembled those of Solomon's kingdom, and also those of the anti-Assyrian coalition of Ahab's time. In his 27th year, Uzziah was made king of Judah. The good understanding between the kingdoms continued, and was kept up during the interregnum of 22 years that followed Jeroboam's death. So far as appears, this period of practical union between the two kingdoms, and of growing prosperity, covered 60 years or more, from the accession of Jero-

boam. As the result of it, Uzziah's kingdom presents to us an aspect of greatness and prosperity in striking contrast with the low estate of his predecessors.

For this period, the Assyrian records are silent, except that the Canon mentions a king, Shalmanezar III., whose reign lasted 10 years. The successes of Jeroboam indicate that the times must have been extremely inglorious for the Assyrians. Something similar is indicated by the general character of the Assyrian records, so far as we have them. The last inscriptions which we examined represented the Assyrian king as supreme in the regions of Syria, northern Israel and the Mediterranean coast, receiving fixed tribute and taxes, and easily putting down all who dared to rise in revolt. The inscriptions next later find Assyria engaged in a most desperate series of struggles to gain possession of these very regions. It is evident that there had been an interval between the two, and an interval marked by Assyrian reverses. Within this interval, probably, occurred the preaching of the prophet Jonah, with which we are concerned in the next two lessons. After this interval, the Assyrian materials for the history are abundant. From 772 B. C., the date of the accession of Assur Daan III., the dates of the Assyrian Canon are confirmed by the eclipse of the sun, 763 B. C., in his 10th year, and by abundant evidences from other sources.